

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 11-19 and 21-29 are pending. Claims 12 was objected to because of a minor informality. Claims 11 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,931,276 to Streng et al. Claims 12-19 and 22-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Streng in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,662,108 to Budd et al.

Response to Rejections

Applicant has amended Claim 11 to include an external closure for the filling lumen. As described in the specification at page 8, lines 28-31, the closure is effective when closed to maintain the bladder in a distended or expanded state. Release of the closure (which can be a valve—see new Claim 29) allows the bladder to drain (through the filling lumen).

Streng discloses charging the bladder with an electrically conductive fluid. However, Streng fails to disclose any external closure for a filling lumen, wherein the closure can maintain the bladder in the distended state during the procedure, and can then be released to drain the bladder. Accordingly, Claim 11 is not anticipated by Streng. Therefore, none of the dependent claims is anticipated by Streng.

It would not have been obvious to modify Streng's apparatus to have an external closure for the filling lumen as claimed. In Streng the bladder is filled with fluid to induce the micturition (voiding) reflex and initiate voiding of the bladder, and then the electrode is used for measuring the bladder pressure and detrusor EMG as the bladder voids (i.e., on its own, not under the control of any external flow control device). The graphs of bladder pressure and flow rate in Figure 6 show filling of the bladder followed by voiding. Because Streng fills the bladder until the micturition reflex is induced, it would be contrary to Streng's purposes to include an external closure to maintain the bladder in the distended state, since it is essential that the bladder be allowed to void once the micturition reflex is induced.

Budd likewise fails to disclose an external closure as required by the claims. Because Budd relates to a mapping catheter for a heart, which is already filled with fluid and which would never be drained, Budd would not have suggested any external closure for a filling lumen.

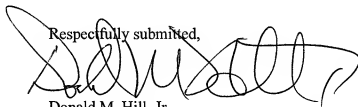
Thus, neither of the cited references discloses or suggests an apparatus having all of the limitations of Claim 1.

Conclusion

Based on the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that all claims are patentable over the cited references and the application is in condition for allowance.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefor (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



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